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## Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, Creator of humanity, bless our lawmakers today as they seek to do Your will. Guide them through this day by Your higher wisdom. Answer every prayer in this Chamber uttered or unexpressed, according to each particular need.

As our Senators labor, help them to move with alacrity, to be patient when they must wait, and to make decisions only when Your answer has become clear. Guard their hearts and minds with a peace that passes understanding.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JACK REED led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, July 16, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator

from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. REED thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will be in a period of morning business. I ask unanimous consent that it be a full hour of morning business because I am going to have to go into a quorum call in a minute to wait for one of my colleagues to come. We have some business to transact in the Senate, and I want to make sure there is somebody here to do that. So I ask unanimous consent that there be a full hour of morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Today, when we finish morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill. As we announced, there will be no rollcall votes tonight. This is the only Monday or Friday during this work period there will be no rollcall votes, unless we are able to get work done that we do not expect to get done that soon.

The amount of work we have to do this work period is significant. As I have indicated, we want to do what we can to finish this Defense authorization bill. We want to do the Homeland Security appropriations bill. We want to be able to complete reconciliation, which is for higher education. We have

SCHIP, for which there is a bipartisan agreement that will be reported out of the committee, I understand, tomorrow, which has been worked on for weeks and weeks by Senators BAUCUS, GRASSLEY, ROCKEFELLER, and HATCH. They have agreed on a bipartisan arrangement. In fact, it may have been—I do not know if it was reported out last week, but I do know there is good bipartisan support on that legislation. Some people believe it is not enough money, the \$35 billion, some think it is too much, but it is bipartisan, and Senator HATCH has contacted the President, that the President would reconsider his threat to veto that bill.

We also have to do the 9/11 Commission recommendations conference report. It is my understanding the House is going to appoint conferees on that today. There has been a lot of work done preconference on that with Democrats and Republicans working together. I think that will work out very well.

We still have the holdup with the ethics and lobbying reform. I do hope we can get that done. We will get it done. It may take a number of cloture votes, but we are going to finish that before the August recess. It would be to the advantage of everyone here to get that done. The staff of Senator MCCONNELL and my staff have worked very hard to see what they can do to help the various committees that are involved in this issue. It is now being held up. I hope this can be worked out. I have reached out to Senator DEMINT, who is the person at this stage holding it up on behalf of the Republicans. He, at this stage, has not been willing to change his position, which is very unfortunate because it is important we work out the earmarking provisions in this bill in conference. We cannot jam something into the process here, where you have the House with one rule, the Senate with another rule, and you go to conference and you wind up in no-man's land. We have to work out something.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Everyone acknowledges we need earmark reform, and the Appropriations Committee has been following that this year. Senators BYRD and COCHRAN have made that direction, even though the legislation has not been completed. But in the meantime, we do not have lobbying and ethics reform, which is long past due. So I hope we can work together to complete our work in a timely fashion; otherwise, it will be finished in an untimely fashion because we are going to finish all this work before we have our August recess.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I withhold that suggestion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have been reminded by staff that of our 30 minutes the Democrats are allotted of the 60 minutes, 30 minutes of our time—in fact, all of it—be given to Senator FEINSTEIN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, after 52 months—about 210 weeks—and about 1,500 days, America finds itself mired in one of the most tragic foreign policy blunders in our Nation's history. The sad part about it is, there is no end in sight. In my view, and that of academics and others, it will take years, and even decades, to finally close the book on the damage this war has caused our troops, our economy, and our moral standing in the world.

On May 24, 2007, President Bush said:

We are there at the invitation of the Iraqi government. This is a sovereign nation. Twelve million people went to the polls to approve a constitution. It's their government's choice. If they were to say leave, we would leave.

That is the quote of President Bush.

This weekend, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki—for whom President Bush has expressed consistent support and confidence—said that Iraqi forces could take control of their security at “any

time” American troops want to leave or were to leave.

A recent poll of the Iraqi people showed that 21 percent think the American presence makes their country safer, while 69 percent say it puts them, the Iraqi people, at greater risk. That is what the Iraqis say.

The Iraqi people and their leaders say they are ready for us to end our combat operation. I think it is time we listen to them.

In the war's soon to be 5 years, our troops have accomplished everything they have been asked to do. They took down the Iraqi dictator. They secured the country for not one, not two, but three elections. They provided the security needed for Iraqi factions to come together to negotiate peaceful settlement of their differences.

But the Iraqi leaders have not done their part. After these 52 months: more than 3,600 Americans killed, tens of thousands wounded, and after nearly \$600 billion of American taxpayer dollars spent. And after this sacrifice—52 months of sacrifice—it is long past time for the Iraqi leaders and the Iraqi people to put their words into action by taking responsibility for their own future. After 52 months, more than 3,600 Americans killed, tens of thousands wounded, and nearly 600 billion in taxpayer dollars spent, President Bush continues to tell our troops and all Americans that we should wait it out, just stay the course. After 52 months, our troops and our security cannot afford the President's “run-out-the-clock” strategy.

We have an opportunity and an obligation to change course in Iraq right now. We can remove our brave troops from the front lines of another country's civil war, a conflict we have no business policing and little chance to diffuse. We can conduct the kind of tough and strong diplomacy required to stabilize Iraq and the region, which even the President's own military experts plead with him to revise. Remember, General Petraeus has said the war cannot be won militarily. We can refocus our resources and fight a real war on terror that drives the terrorists back to the darkest caves and corners of the Earth.

We can choose that path now. We don't have to mark time waiting for the President to wake up one morning with a change of heart or his term to run out. We don't have to wait 2 more months for an arbitrary September deadline when it is so clear a course change is required and required now. With our courage and our votes, we can rise above the tragic failure to deliver a new course that our brave troops and all Americans demand and deserve. We can do that today by voting for the Levin-Reed amendment to the Defense authorization bill.

What does Levin-Reed do? It sets a firm date and an end date to transition the mission and begin the reduction of U.S. forces beginning 120 days after enactment and completed by April 30 of

2008. Levin-Reed limits the U.S. military mission after April 30 to counterterrorism; the training of Iraqi security forces and protection of U.S. personnel and assets; requires that the reduction in forces be part of a comprehensive, diplomatic, regional, political, and economic effort; and appoints an international mediator to bring together the warring factions. That provision dealing with appointing an international mediator to bring together warring factions was newly placed in the bill. The idea and the language came from Senator HAGEL of Nebraska and is a great addition to this amendment.

To those who say this language is binding on the President, I say it is, and that is what it is meant to be. It is binding because the President has resisted every effort we have made to work with him to change the direction of his failed Iraq policy. The record will show that binding language was not our first choice. We passed legislation requiring that 2006 be a year of transition. Instead, the President ignored this language and dug us in even deeper into an intractable civil war. We gave the President a chance to develop his own new course as Commander in Chief. He refused to do that. Instead, he chose to extend deployments and ask even more of our brave men and women in uniform.

Earlier this year we passed legislation that would have begun the phased redeployment while leaving significant discretion to the President about how and when to execute the redeployment. Instead, the President vetoed this bill and asserted that only he had the power to set war policy, even though we have a constitutional obligation to do so.

So the record is clear, the President's decision to stubbornly cling to the current course leaves this body no choice but to enact binding language. He has failed to lead us out of Iraq. We are ready to show him the way.

I am going to propound a unanimous consent. I have the greatest respect for my friend, the distinguished junior Senator from Arizona, but I say that I am going to enforce the rule that when I propound this, the distinguished Senator from Arizona should either agree to it or object. This is not the time for speeches because if he objects to it, I have more to say.

So I ask unanimous consent that if the House further amends H.R. 1 with the text of H.R. 1401 and requests a conference with the Senate—Mr. President, I misread the first line. I ask unanimous consent that if the House further amends H.R. 1 with the text of H.R. 1401 and requests a conference with the Senate, that the Senate agree to the request and appoint the same conferees which the Senate has already appointed to H.R. 1.

Mr. KYL addressed the Chair.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if the Senator could withhold.

I withdraw the unanimous consent request.